



PRESS RELEASE

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CIVILIAN COMMISSION ESTABLISHED FOR SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT OVERSIGHT, USHERING IN NEW ERA OF COMMUNITY-LAW ENFORCEMENT RELATIONS

A new Civilian Oversight Commission, aimed at boosting transparency and increasing trust between communities and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, was established today by the Board of Supervisors.

The Board also appointed nine commissioners to serve on the panel and approved hiring an executive director, attorney Brian Williams. Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Supervisor Hilda L. Solis authored the December, 2014 [motion](#) that started the process that led to the commission's creation.

"One of my first votes after being elected County Supervisor was to support the creation of this Civilian Oversight Commission. I am delighted that the commission is finally ready to launch, and I am proud of the thoughtful and community-oriented process we took to get here," said Supervisor Solis, the Board's chair. "This commission reflects a wide range of perspectives that I think will be critical to ensuring its success."

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said the new commission has a vital role to play. "There has to be more engagement with the public and Civilian Oversight is a vehicle to facilitate the mechanisms of review and assessment to ensure credibility, as we re-establish public trust," he said. "A civilian panel will give the public a dedicated forum to promote accountability and to build partnership with the Sheriff, LASD, the Office of Inspector General and the Board of Supervisors."

Supervisor Sheila Kuehl praised the incoming members of the panel. "Every one of the Commissioners we are appointing today has a history of deep interest in, and understanding of, communities and community service," she said. "They have shown they are dedicated to objectivity and impartiality in decision making, and have demonstrated, each in their own sphere, their ability to evaluate the facts and make recommendations for change. The process for getting here has taken time, but we had to do this right, as a lot of hopes and expectations ride on their shoulders."

Supervisor Don Knabe said: “My expectation with the establishment of the Sheriff’s Department Civilian Oversight Commission is that it will expand the Sheriff’s ongoing efforts to increase transparency, change the culture of the department and build relationships with the community. Everyone’s voice should be heard and constructive engagement and dialogue are important tools that will benefit law enforcement and the public. Working together, it is my hope that we will strengthen our public safety teams and better protect our neighborhoods.”

Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich added: “I am hopeful that the composition of the Commission, including my appointee, will enable the Sheriff’s Department to continue to do its most important work in protecting public safety while maintaining confidence in the department’s operations going forward. It should be free of personal agendas and function as a bridge between the Sheriff’s Department and the community as the ordinance states.”

The new commissioners include community and faith leaders, a retired Sheriff’s lieutenant, and attorneys with a broad range of experience—from former prosecutors and public defenders to professors and executives from legal non-profit organizations. They are:

- Hernán Vera, attorney and former president and CEO of Public Counsel, appointed by Supervisor Solis
- Xavier Thompson, President of Baptist Ministers’ Conference and Senior Pastor of the Southern Saint Paul Church, appointed by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas
- Patti Giggans, Executive Director of Peace Over Violence, appointed by Supervisor Kuehl
- JP Harris, former Sheriff’s lieutenant, appointed by Supervisor Knabe
- Robert C. Bonner, attorney and former U.S. Attorney and DEA Administrator, appointed by Supervisor Antonovich
- Sean Kennedy, executive director of Center for Juvenile Law & Policy at Loyola Law School and former federal public defender, appointed by the Board of Supervisors
- Heather Miller, Rabbi, Beth Chayim Chadashim, appointed by the Board of Supervisors
- Priscilla Ocen, Loyola Law School Associate Professor, appointed by the Board of Supervisors
- Lael Rubin, former Deputy District Attorney, appointed by the Board of Supervisors

Establishment of the commission comes after extensive public outreach and research by a seven-member working group that made recommendations on the commission’s mission, authority, size, structure, and relationship to the offices of the Sheriff and Inspector General. For more information about the process, go to www.lacounty.gov/sheriff-oversight/ .